

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PORT O 01445 01 OF 02 262105Z
ACTION ARA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 715

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PORT OF SPAIN 1445

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS EXCEPT PARA 4 (XGDS-1)
TAGS: OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS) PFOR, TD
SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S VISIT TO TRINIDAD

REF: STATE 119152

1. VISIT OF SECRETARY VANCE TO TRINIDAD OFFERS OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITY TO STIMULATE FULLER DIALOGUE WITH THIS IMPORTANT CARIBBEAN STATE WHOSE OPEN DEMOCRACY, FREE PRESS, AND STAUNCH COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS ARE SO COMPATIBLE WITH OUR OWN PRINCIPLES. THIS MESSAGE DELINEATES A NUMBER OF AREAS OF SUBSTANTIVE INTEREST WHICH I BELIEVE ON THE BASIS OF MY EXPERIENCE HERE PRIME MINISTER ERIC WILLIAMS WOULD WISH TO DISCUSS WITH THE SECRETARY OR WHICH IT MIGHT BE PARTICULARLY IN OUR INTEREST TO RAISE. A SEPARATE MESSAGE WILL PROPOSE THEMES FOR TOASTS AND PUBLIC COMMENTS. I AM MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER DONALDSON FRIDAY MORNING TO DISCUSS THE WISHES OF THE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO GOVERNMENT, AND MAY RECEIVE SOME SPECIFIC SUBSTANTIVE AGENDA INFORMATION AT THAT TIME. I SHALL ALSO SUBMIT A SUGGESTED SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES DURING THE VISIT AFTER MY MEETING WITH THE MINISTER.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 PORT O 01445 01 OF 02 262105Z

2. DIALOGUE--GOTT OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN HIGHLY POSITIVE REGARDING THE FAR-RANGING ACTIONS BEING TAKEN BY PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE NEW ADMINISTRATION. WE THEREFORE HAVE A PARTICULARLY STRONG BASIS FOR STRENGTHENING OUR DIALOGUE WITH TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO AT THIS TIME IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SECRETARY'S VISIT. DUE TO THE PERSONAL STYLE OF PRIME MINISTER WILLIAMS THIS GOVERN-

MENT HAS NOT SUSTAINED A HABIT OF DIALOGUE AND FRANKNESS OF DISCUSSION. WILLIAMS CAN BE MOST CHARMING, HOWEVER, AND THE SECRETARY'S VISIT CAN EMPHASIZE THE USG DESIRE TO SHARE AND DISCUSS MATTERS OF COMMON CONCERN FRANKLY AND WITH THE FULLEST MUTUAL RESPECT. OUR AWARENESS OF AND INTEREST IN THE CARIBBEAN NEEDS TO BE UNDERSTOOD AS BROADER AND MORE PERCEPTIVE THAN JUST CONTAINING CASTRO AND BACKING UP AMERICAN MINING AND PETROLEUM COMPANIES: INTEREST AND MUTUAL DIALOGUE INSTEAD OF INTERVENTION (IN 1976 IT WAS CALLED "DESTABILIZATION."). SUGGEST SECRETARY ALSO COMMEND AMBASSADOR DESIGNATE FOX AS A CHANNEL THROUGH WHOM HE WILL HOPE TO REMAIN IN COMMUNICATION WITH THE PRIME MINISTER.

3. SOUTHERN AFRICA--WILLIAMS WILL WISH TO GET THE USG ASSESSMENT ON DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AND PROSPECTS FOR RAPID ADVANCEMENT TOWARD MAJORITY GOVERNMENTS WITHOUT EXPANDED BLOODSHED. TANZANIA'S NYERERE IS HELD IN PARTICULARLY HIGH REGARD HERE.

4. CUBA--ALTHOUGH CUBA IS NOT CONSIDERED BY THE TRINIDAD GOVERNMENT TO BE A PROPER SUBJECT FOR POINTED PUBLIC STATEMENTS OR EVEN PRIVATE ARM TWISTING BY USG OFFICIALS WHILE ON TRINIDAD SOIL, IN PRIVATE CONSULTATION DR. WILLIAMS WILL BE INTERESTED IN OUR ASSESSMENT OF CUBAN INTERNATIONAL MISCHIEF MAKING, PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA AND THE CARIBBEAN. WILLIAMS FROWNED STRONGLY ON THE CUBAN EXPEDITIONARY INVOLVEMENT IN ANGOLA, AND

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PORT O 01445 01 OF 02 262105Z

AVIDLY SOUGHT OUR CURRENT INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS AT THE HEIGHT OF THAT EXERCISE. AS AN EARLY PROPONENT OF CAUB'S REINTEGRATION INTO THE REGION, WILLIAMS WILL ALSO JOPE TO GET A READING ON PROSPECTS FOR PROGRESS TOWARD CUBAN-US NORMALIZATION.

5. THE CARIBBEAN--RECOMMEND WE SEEK WILLIAMS' ASSESSMENTS OF THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC TRENDS IN THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN AND HIS SUGGESTIONS AS TO HOW THE USG CAN ASSIST TO PROMOTE PROSPEROUS DEMOCRATIC EVOLUTION AND STRONGER MUTUAL COOPERATION IN THE AREA INSTEAD OF FRAGMENTATION, VIOLENCE, CHAOS, AND POLEMIC. TRINIDAD HAS COMMITTED SIGNIFICANT FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE TROUBLED ECONOMIES OF JAMAICA AND GUYANA AND IS CURRENTLY CONSIDERING FURTHER REQUESTS FROM BOTH GOVERNMENTS (SEE PORT OF SPAIN 1407). WILLIAMS WOULD BE INTERESTED IN THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE USG MAY BE ABLE TO ASSIST, SINCE THE GOTTS OBVIOUSLY CANNOT PROP UP ITS SICK COUSINS ALONE AND THERE IS

ALREADY CONCERN AT BECOMING OVER-EXTENDED IN THIS REGARD
WHEN THE SAME FUNDS ARE ULTIMATELY COMMITTED TO
TRINIDAD'S OWN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.

6. OAS--THE GOTT IS NOT SIGNIFICANTLY INTERESTED IN
THE OAS IN COMPARISON WITH MANY SMALL LATIN STATES.
WILLIAMS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY WISH TO HEAR HTE SECRETARY'S
IMPRESSIONS OF THE CONCERNS AND IDEAS OF THE HEMI-
SPHERE'S FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING IN GRENADA, BUT
DISCUSSION OF OAS INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES TURNS HIM OFF.
HE MAY USE THE OCCASION, HOWEVER, TO URGE ADJUSTMENTS
TO PERMIT EASY MEMBERSHIP FOR GUYANA AND BELIZE, OR
TO SOLICIT MORE DIRECT USG ENDORSEMENT OF BELIZEAN
INDEPENDENCE AND PROTECTION FROM GUATEMALAN DIS-
MEMBERMENT.

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PAGE 01 PORT O 01445 02 OF 02 262116Z
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O 262000Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 716

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PORT OF SPAIN 1445

LIMDIS

7. CUBAN-EXILE TERRORISM--THE BOMBING OF THE
GUYANESE CONSULATE HERE AND SUBSEQUENT
SABOTAGE OF A CUBANA AIRCRAFT AND ARREST IN TRINIDAD OF PRIME
SUSPECTS INVOLVED IN THE CUBANA CRASH BROUGHT VIVIDLY
HOME TO TRINIDADIAN IN 1976 THEIR VULNERABILITY TO
TERRORIST VIOLENCE BY THE ANTI-CASTRO CUBANS. THE
RECENT BOMBING OF THE MACKAY AIRWAYS INSTALLATION IN
FLORIDA AND PROMINENT PUBLICITY HERE OF JUAN BOSCH'S
ALLEGATIONS FROM A VENEZUELAN JAIL CELL HAVE KEPT
THE SUBJECT IN THE FOREFRONT. FORTHRIGHT COMMENTS
COMING FROM THE SECRETARY REGARDING USG DETERMINATION
TO SQUELCH TERRORISM OF THE ANTI-CASTRO CARIETY AS
WELL AS OTHER TYPES WOULD BE HELPFUL. IF FEASIBLE,
RENEWAL OF THE 1976 OFFER TO PROVIDE FOR MORE

DETAILED BRIEFINGS AND LIAISON ON TERRORISM WOULD BE DESIRABLE.

8. VENEZUELA--WILLIAMS IS DUBIOUS OF VENEZUELA'S INTENTIONS IN THE CARIBBEAN. UNRESOLVED VENEZUELAN TERRITORIAL QUESTIONS INVOLVING GUYANA, THE NETHERLANDS ANTILLES AND TRINIDAD LIE IN THE BACKGROUND, BUT MORE PERTINENT ARE THE EXPANDING ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL INTERESTS OF VENEZUELA AS SHE FLEXES HER PETROLEUM
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PORT O 01445 02 OF 02 262116Z

WEALTH. WILLIAMS VIEWS THE CARIBBEAN ISLANDS POLITIES AS STILL TOO IMMATURE TO DEAL CONSTRUCTIVELY AT THIS TIME WITH AN ENERGETIC NEW BIG-POWER ACTOR ON THE CARIBBEAN SCENE AND WISHES VENEZUELA TO BE KEPT CAUTIOUSLY AT ARM'S DISTANCE INsofar AS THE CARICOM AREA IS CONCERNED. HE WOULD BE SENSITIVE TO ANY USG PRONOUNCEMENTS WHICH SEEMED TO ENCOURAGE VENEZUELA TO TAKE A LARGER ROLE IN THE AREA.

9. PUERTO RICO--WHILE MANY TRINIDADIANs, INCLUDING THE PRIME MINISTER, FEEL THAT IF THEY WERE MAKING THE CHOICES IN PUERTO RICO THAT THEY WOULD OPT FOR COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE FROM THE UNITED STATES, THERE IS FAIRLY WIDESPREAD UNDERSTANDING THAT THE PEOPLE OF THE ISLAND HAVE FREELY DETERMINED THEIR PRESENT STATUS AND CONTINUE TO HAVE FREEDOM OF CHOICE. DR. WILLIAMS HAS BLUNTLY CRITICIZED ANY OUTSIDE MEDDLING IN THE MATTER. IN A SENSE, HOWEVER, WILLIAMS VIEWS PUERTO RICO AS AN ACTOR AT LEAST PARTIALLY IN ITS OWN RIGHT IN CARIBBEAN AFFAIRS. IN EARLY 1976 HE INAUGURATED A DIALOGUE WITH PUERTO RICAN AUTHORITIES WITH THE COOPERATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE. AN INITIAL MEETING WAS HELD IN PORT OF SPAIN AND THE NEXT MEETING WAS TO HAVE BEEN CONVENED IN SAN JUAN. THE PROJECT BECAME SIDETRACKED DUE TO THE ELECTION YEAR IN BOTH COUNTRIES, AND IN SAN JUAN THE GOVERNMENT HAS CHANGED. THUS FAR, THERE HAS BEEN NO INDICATION WHETHER THE NEW GOVERNOR IS INTERESTED IN CONTINUING THE DISCUSSIONS (SEE PORT OF SPAIN 694).

10. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT--TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO'S OIL-FINANCED INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM HAS NOW REACHED THE IMPLEMENTATION STAGE, WITH CONTRACTS ALREADY AWARDED TO SOME US FIRMS ON VARIOUS PARTS OF THE CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM (ELECTRICAL PLANT, WATER SUPPLY, STEEL MILL, PORT FACILITIES) AND MORE
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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PORT O 01445 02 OF 02 262116Z

LIKELY TO COME. SECRETARY MAY WISH TO INDICATE AWARENESS OF THIS MAJOR CHANGE IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURE NOW UNDER WAY, TO EXPRESS IN GENERAL TERMS USG HOPE FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM, AND SATISFACTION WITH THE CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROGRAM BEING MADE BY AMERICAN TECHNOLOGY AND INDUSTRY. USG HAS INTEREST IN TRINIDAD SUCCEEDING AND WE HOPE THAT THROUGH CONTINUING CONSULTATION WE WILL ENSURE THAT WE DO NOT WORK AT CROSS PURPOSES.

11. ENERGY--GOTT HAS NOT REACTED PUBLICLY TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S NEW ENERGY PROGRAM, DESPITE HEAVY RELIANCE ON PETROLEUM EXPORTS. SECRETARY MAY BE QUESTIONED ON THE NEW ENERGY POLICY AND MAY WISH TO EMPHASIZE OUR SATISFACTION WITH TRINIDAD AS A RELIABLE AND GEOGRAPHICALLY IMPORTANT PRODUCER.

12. TRADE--MOST SENSITIVE ISSUE FOR GOTT IN RELATION TO TRADE WITH USA IS HIGH TARIFF ON RUM AND AT SOME POINT A TRINIDADIAN OFFICIAL IS VIRTUALLY SURE TO BRING THIS UP. WITH RUM TARIFF CONSIDERABLY HIGHER THAN DUTY ON SUCH DISTILLED SPIRITS AS SCOTCH, GIN AND VODKA, GOTT WAS DISAPPOINTED THAT RUM WAS EXCLUDED FROM GSP LIST (TEQUILA WAS INCLUDED) AND THAT USG DECLINED TO DISCUSS RUM IN TROPICAL PRODUCTS NEGOTIATIONS UNDER MTN IN GENVA. CURRENT INTERNATIONAL SUGAR NEGOTIATIONS UNDERWAY IN GENEVA ARE ALSO OF CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO.

13. OMEGA STATION--WE ARE ENTERING INTO DISCUSSIONS HERE WITH THE GOTT IN THE HOPE OF EXTENDING FOR THREE YEARS BEYOND 1977 THE OPERATION OF THE OMEGA LONG-RANGE NAVIGATION STATION. THIS IS NOT A MAJOR ISSUE FOR THE USG AND WE ARE PREPARED TO CLOSE THE STATION DOWN IF AN AGREEMENT IS NOT FEASIBLE ON OUR TERMS. SINCE IN THE GOTT THE DECISION WILL ULTIMATELY BE MADE BY
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 PORT O 01445 02 OF 02 262116Z

WILLIAMS HIMSELF, THE SUBJECT MAY ARISE DURING THE SECRETARY'S MEETING AND HE SHOULD BE AWARE OF THE SUBJECT. WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO PROVIDE A PERTINENT STATUS REPORT CLOSER TO TIME OF SECRETARY'S ARRIVAL.
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